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SUBJECT: CHAD: TALKING TO SUDANESE REBELS

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¶1. (SBU) Summary: Sudanese rebel leaders Adam Shogar, Gamal Addine Ibrahim, Tadjadine Bechin Niam and Sharif Harir told Ambassador on March 9 that the proposed SLM rebel conference should occur soon, but funding for transportation and logistics is needed. Shogar reiterated that a unified SLM/A position must be achieved before any rebel conference can occur. The recent Tripoli conference was also discussed. End Summary.

¶2. (SBU) Adam Shogar and Gamal Addine Ibrahim briefed the Ambassador and EmbOffs on the latest developments in the proposed SLM/A conference. Shogar laid out his vision for Darfur rebel unity, with the SLM/A conference "preparing the way" for the National Redemption Front (NRF) conference. Shogar told Ambassador that "most" commanders intend to participate in the SLM/A conference, including Sharif Harir, Ahmed Abdul Shafi and Adam Bakhit. However, Shogar said that Abdulwahid Nur and Minni Minawi and his followers would not participate. In response to a question from the Ambassador, Shogar noted that Ahmed Diraige would not participate in the conference either, because he was not a SLM/A member. He requested USG assistance in transporting the commanders to the event site (Note: No site was proposed. End Note) and resolving other logistical problems. In addition, he mentioned that his rebels lack access to adequate health care.

¶3. (SBU) Ambassador said that he would relay Shogar's request to the Department, but stressed that the U.S. endorses the AU/UN initiative to facilitate a commanders conference and we hope the SLM/A will cooperate in this effort. We are prepared to do what we can to see the conference realized soon. Shogar responded that the reputation of the AU was so poor that many rebels did not want to work under AU auspices. NRF will deal with the UN, but wants a new AU facilitation team (i.e., to get rid of those involved in the Abuja negotiations). Sharif Harir said that they had to accept the AU as "a fact of life," but they had no confidence in it after Abuja.

¶4. (SBU) As some rebel leaders had just returned from the Tripoli conference, Ambassador asked what role the Libyans and Eritreans play in the peace process. (Note: Shogar told us that Khalil was still in Tripoli. End Note) Shogar said that he did not attend the Tripoli conference but that a clear conclusion was that rebel groups needed to unify first in order to engage Sudan in meaningful negotiations. Shogar commented that he does not trust Libya) despite Libya's offer of medical assistance to his fighters) and believes that Tripoli wants a peace settlement that favors the Bashir regime.

¶5. (SBU) Comment: These visits reaffirm Reftel A conclusions on the enormous obstacles ahead for the commander's

conference.

16. (U) Tripoli minimize considered.
TAMLYN